

Stratham, Our Town

An Initiative to Save our Open Land

Issue 4, February 5, 2002

Stratham Conservation Commission

The Arithmetic of Growth, Part 2

In a money-saving effort to preserve Stratham's rural character and to protect some of its open space from development, the **Stratham Our Town** initiative is asking Stratham voters to approve a \$5 million bond issue. The money will be used to permanently protect as many as 750 acres of buildable land. As a result, our town will curb water consumption, retard the growth of traffic congestion and preserve open space forever.

Below are two alternatives for a sample parcel of land, using current values:

**A 100 acre parcel, appraised at \$1.2 million,
is currently developable into 40 house lots.**

Cost to Stratham residents if this property is DEVELOPED:

When the subdivision of forty new homes is built, the additional tax burden to all residents will be \$190,670 per year, *each year*. To arrive at this figure, we multiplied the cost of one new home (town, county and school taxes) by 40, rounding to the nearest dollar. (See Figure 1)

Yearly Costs for Forty Homes

Town Tax (40 x \$563.04)	\$22,522
County Tax (40 x \$408.00)	\$16,320
School Tax (40 x \$10,497.78)	\$419,911
Total New Tax Liability	\$458,753
Less Property Taxes (40 x \$6702.08)	-\$268,083
Total Annual Tax Deficit (every year, forever)	\$190,670

Figure 1 (See data on back for detail)

- This single development will increase taxes by \$190,670 per year, every year, forever.
- Developing the land will result in a tax rate increase of 42¢ per thousand, forever.
- It will increase traffic congestion on our roads.
- It will cause a loss of open space.

Cost to Stratham residents if this property is PROTECTED:

When the landowner is willing to sell, the Selectmen will hold a public hearing to discuss the merits of the property, appraisal value of the land, and purchase options. If purchase is approved, the cost will be \$88,468 per year for 15 years. (See Figure 2)

Cost of Open Space Protection

15 Year Bond Payment	\$ 92,489
(<small>\$960,000 @ 5% for 15 years</small>)	
Less Property Taxes	-\$ 4,021
Open Space Cost	\$ 88,468

Open Space Bottom Line

Development Cost	\$190,670
Less Open Space Alternative	-\$ 88,468
Net Open Space Savings	\$102,202
15 Year Savings	\$1,532,985
30 Year Savings	\$4,392,990

Figure 2 (See data on back for detail)

- This Open Space Alternative will increase taxes by only \$88,468 per year for 15 years.
- Protecting the land will result in a tax rate increase of 20¢ per thousand, for only 15 years.
- After 15 years the bond will be paid off and the property will continue to generate \$4,021 in Current Use tax revenue each year, every year, forever.

For more information or to take a closer look at our data,
please call Kirk Trachy at 778-7212 or Roger Stephenson at 778-7970.

Stratham Conservation Commission
Stratham, Our Town
Town Offices
Stratham, NH 03885

Bulk Rate
US Postage
PAID
Stratham, NH
Permit #1

Resident
Stratham, NH 03885

We need your help!
Save the date.
Arrange for a baby sitter now!
Stratham will vote on the bond at Town Hall on
March 15 at 7:30 pm. It will be your only chance
to cast your vote on this issue.
To volunteer your time and expertise, please call Anne Sloan at 778-9018.

***Stratham Our Town is a cost-effective investment in
the rural character of Stratham.***

Conservation Commission
Gordon Barker, Chair (778-1039); Pat Elwell
(778-1659), Jerry Batchelder (772-5196), Brad Jones
(772-6922), Bob Keating (772-4080), Jim Cushman
(778-0847), Richard Grimes (778-9773), and
Patricia Grahame (778-7308).
Subcommittee for the Our Town Initiative
Roger Stephenson (778-7970), Jennifer Kinsey
(772-5435), Caroline Robinson (772-6646),
Anne Sloan (778-9018), Kirk Trachy (778-7212).

Calculations are based on this data:
• average cost of a new home = \$400,000
• property taxes for the "developed" option are
based upon 68% valuation
• average 4-bedroom home has 1.5 schoolchildren
• average yearly schooling cost per child is \$6999.
• development rights of the parcel are valued at
80% of the total appraised value, \$1.2 million
• open space landowner still pays Current Use
property taxes.